

C O M M U N I T Y N E W S

New York kids in orbit over JSC contacts

By John Ira Petty

Johnson Space Center has become a focal point for a group of pretty remarkable students at a New York high school. They've even made Eileen Hawley, news chief in Public Affairs' Information and Media Support Branch, an honorary astronomy class member.

It all began with STS-95. Linda Mantovi, who with aide Steven Sgandurra teaches the eight-member astronomy class at the Hallen School in New Rochelle, N.Y., began a unit on the mission last October, about a month before the October 29 launch.

Before STS-95 was ready to land on November 7, many of the 270 students at the school were following the group's activities, mostly via enlarged printouts of e-mails Mantovi posted on the school's bulletin board.

The private school serves grades kindergarten through 12. Its students are from all over the tri-state (New York City) metropolitan area. They are emotionally disturbed, and have been referred to the Hallen School by their home school districts. They face a variety of challenges and come from a wide range of backgrounds.

Many are very intelligent, Mantovi said, and they thrive in the school's nurturing environment. Some earn what amount to honors diplomas and a number go on to college. The school prepares others for work-study programs.

"It's a great group of kids," she said. "Eileen is extremely important to them. People who don't work with kids don't realize the kind of impact a person like her can have."

The STS-95 flight really fueled the enthusiasm of the astronomy class. Most of the eight are high school juniors.

The unit, focusing on John Glenn, began with e-mail messages from the students to Johnson Space Center people. Mantovi said that among the responses, Hawley's stood out. An e-mail correspondence began, which was the fodder for the school's bulletin board.

Excitement grew when the students heard Hawley doing commentary from the Mission Control Center, and when on another occasion they saw her responding to questions on television. "Some of them came to me and said, 'This is something I'll remember when I'm old,'" Mantovi said.

An e-mail from the teacher to Hawley on October 30 summed it up pretty well. "There was such a good feel to the class

yesterday. It truly made me understand why I teach," Mantovi wrote.

"You have added so much – these kids really felt important. It was unbelievable to them that you play such a huge part to this mission and still had time for them. You really made these kids feel good. Thank you."

Hawley said that when she first heard from members of the class, "I could actually feel the enthusiasm in their e-mail



Eileen Hawley JSC Photo DCS00510 by Robert Markowitz

note. I knew these were some very special kids indeed. I'm grateful to them and to Linda. They represent our future and I think it looks pretty good."

A self-acknowledged space buff, Mantovi said that by the end of the mission Glenn was like her students' grandfather and space was something personal. "They could see my enthusiasm, and they took it on," she said. "Still, I was surprised they took to the astronomy program the way they did."

She said she wouldn't be surprised if some of them eventually work in the world of science. She hopes they will retain their interest in the space program after high school. "The sky's the limit with these students," Mantovi said. "They can do almost anything they dream of."

Mantovi, 28, taught special education for two years in New York public schools, and has been at the Hallen School, just north of New York City, for two years. She is working on her master's in special education. ■

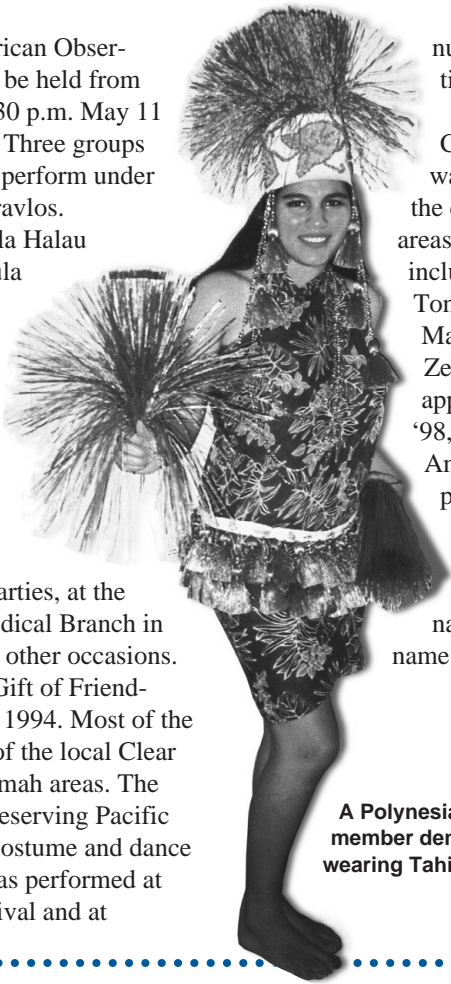
Asian Pacific American Observance

May 11, 1999

Asian Pacific American Observance at JSC will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. May 11 in the Bldg. 3 cafeteria. Three groups have been scheduled to perform under the direction of Josie Travlos.

The dance group Hula Halau O' Loki Mele Mele (Hula School of the Yellow Rose) was formed from members of an Hawaiian cultural group who danced at the group's annual luau. The group will perform Hawaiian music. Hula Halau O' Loki Mele Mele has performed for private parties, at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and on many other occasions.

Makana Aloha, or "Gift of Friendship," was organized in 1994. Most of the members are residents of the local Clear Lake, Seabrook and Kemah areas. The group is dedicated to preserving Pacific culture and the music, costume and dance of Hawaii. The group has performed at the Seabrook Hula Festival and at



A Polynesian Cultural Association member demonstrates the hula wearing Tahitian attire.

numerous church functions in the local area. The Polynesian Cultural Association was formed to promote the culture of the seven areas of the South Pacific including Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tahiti and the Maori culture of New Zealand. The group has appeared at Shrimporee '98, the Asian Pacific American Heritage parade of 1998 and the "Dancin' in the Streets" parade at the 1996 Houston International Festival, to name just a few. ■

Safety Fair set for May 21

To enhance the welfare of its employees at the workplace, at home, and on the road, Johnson Space Center will host a personal safety fair on May 21. The Safety Fair will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the lobby of the historic Mission Control Center and its adjacent parking lot.

A major highlight for the day will be free safety checks of children's car seats for JSC employees and contractors. The checks will be conducted by certified inspectors from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Texas Department of Health/Safe Riders, the Greater Houston Area National Safe Kids Coalition sponsored by Texas Children's Hospital, and Houston Community College.

"Four out of every five child car seats pose a real safety hazard, either because the children aren't placed in the seats properly, or the seats themselves are not correctly installed in the car," said Harry Crum, NHTSA law enforcement liaison.

"These inspections are potential life savers." Employees are invited to drive their cars to the Mission Control parking lot for the free inspection service. The inspections are extremely thorough and ensure that the child is securely belted in place and the car seat is

Request for Volunteers

Volunteer "scribes" are needed to help with child car seat inspections. Scribes would work with the expert inspection teams to document their findings. Interested volunteers should contact Rindy Carmichael at x45078.

properly anchored. In addition, inspectors check for any possible recall notices on the car seat and demonstrate proper installation techniques. In addition to the car seat safety checks, the NHTSA will host an information

booth in recognition of "National Buckle Up Week," encouraging drivers and passengers to belt themselves in place every time they take a car on the road.

The Safety Fair, which also features presentations and information on personal watercraft safety, tips for avoiding car theft, home fire protection, and hurricane safety, is part of JSC's "Voluntary Protection Program" safety campaign to ensure a safe workplace. ■

GILRUTH CENTER NEWS

<http://www4.jsc.nasa.gov/ah/exceaa/Gilruth/Gilruth.htm>

Hours: The Gilruth Center is open from 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 6:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. Contact the Gilruth Center at x33345.

Sign up policy: All classes and athletic activities are on a first-come, first-served basis. Sign up in person at the Gilruth Center and show a yellow Gilruth or weight room badge. Classes tend to fill up two weeks in advance. Payment must be made in full, in exact change or by check, at the time of registration. No registration will be taken by telephone. For more information, call x33345.

Gilruth badges: Required for use of the Gilruth Center. Employees, spouses, eligible dependents, NASA retirees and spouses may apply for photo identification badges from 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays. Cost is \$10. Dependents must be between 16 and 23 years old.

Nutrition intervention program: Six-week program includes lectures, a private consultation with the dietitian and

blood analysis to chart your progress. Program is open to all employees, contractors and spouses. For additional information call Tammie Shaw at x32980.

Defensive driving: One-day course is offered once a month at the Gilruth Center. Pre-registration required. Cost is \$25. Call for next available class.

Stamp club: Meets every second and fourth Monday at 7 p.m. in Rm. 216.

Weight safety: Required course for employees wishing to use the Gilruth weight room. Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$5. Annual weight room use fee is \$90. The cost for additional family members is \$50.

Exercise: Low-impact class meets from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Cost is \$24 for eight weeks.

Step/bench aerobics: Low-impact cardiovascular workout. Classes meet from 5:15-6:15 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Cost is \$32 for eight weeks. Call Kristen Taragzewski, instructor, at x36891 for more information.

Yoga: Stretching class of low-impact exercises designed for people of all ages and abilities in a Westernized format. Meets Thursdays 5-6 p.m. Cost is \$32 for eight weeks. Call Darrell Matula, instructor, at x38520 for more information.

Ballroom dancing: Classes meet from 7-8:15 p.m. Thursdays for beginner advanced classes and from 8:15-9:30 p.m. for beginner-intermediate and intermediate students. Cost is \$60 per couple.

Country and western dancing: Beginner class meets 7-8:30 p.m. Monday. Advanced class (must know basic steps to all dances) meets 8:30-10 p.m. Monday. Cost is \$20 per couple.

Fitness program: Health-related fitness program includes a medical screening examination and a 12-week individually prescribed exercise program. For additional information call Larry Wier at x30301.